



January 1, 2026

Trail Tales

Official Newsletter
of the
New Mexico 4-Wheelers



www.nm4w.org

December 2025 Recap

By Frank Whiston

New Mexico 4-Wheelers closed out the year with snow, scenery, camaraderie, and plenty of trail time.

December delivered a full calendar of diverse adventures for NM4W members, from snowy mountain forests and holiday traditions to rock crawling, relaxed exploration, and community gatherings. With changing weather, varied terrain, and strong participation, these rides were a perfect capstone to an incredible year on the trail.

William Crawley

Datil and Sawtooth Mountains – December 6, 2025



Members headed into the rugged Datil and Sawtooth Mountains for a winter adventure that showcased the quiet beauty of western New Mexico. The ride offered wide-open views, remote forest roads, and the kind of solitude that makes late-season wheeling special. With cool temperatures and scenic terrain, the group enjoyed a peaceful day exploring one of the state's lesser-traveled mountain regions.

Jack Dickey

Christmas Tree Run – December 6, 2025

Thirteen members in nine rigs ventured into the Jemez Mountains for NM4W's always-popular Christmas Tree Run. With 3–6 inches of fresh snow and cold temperatures keeping mud to a minimum, conditions were ideal for a festive day on forest roads.

The group traveled NM 126 to FR 376, then climbed onto the mesa via FR 604, where the first successful tree harvest took place. More stops along FR 606 brought smiles, laughter,



and snow play for kids and grandkids alike. A sunny meadow provided a perfect lunch spot—and the setting for a snowman built with teamwork and enthusiasm. The day also highlighted the club’s preparedness and community spirit when a nearby family needed first aid for a minor injury. Thanks to quick action and a well-stocked first aid kit, the situation was handled smoothly. The group returned to the air-up spot by mid-afternoon, wrapping up a memorable holiday tradition in the mountains.

Douglas Story II

Mistletoe Hunt in the San Mateo Mountains – December 7, 2025

This unique and lighthearted ride lived up to expectations, with mistletoe sightings everywhere once the group reached the San Mateo Mountains. Following a route inspired by Willie’s February route, the ride mixed exploration with fun trivia and seasonal cheer.

The outing sparked discussion about turning the Mistletoe Hunt into an annual tradition alongside the Christmas Tree Run—another example of NM4W blending trail exploration with creative, community-driven events.



Snow Petersen

Mt. Taylor & South San Mateo Mesa – December 12, 2025



Originally planned as an “up and over” Mt. Taylor route, this weather-contingent ride adapted to heavy snow conditions discovered during scouting. Instead, 13 rigs, 16 people, and 4 dogs explored western and northern Mt. Taylor forest roads and tackled part of the lower-elevation Mt. Taylor / La Mosca Peak loop.

Snow above 8,800 feet added challenge and fun, including a winch recovery on a steep, damaged section of road. After a calm, wind-free lunch in a sunny meadow, the group continued northwest toward San Mateo and onto South San Mateo Mesa.

The mesa rewarded the group with stunning views, prehistoric-feeling landscapes, and rare silence. With seasonal road closures approaching, members explored as much as possible before sunset. Nearly 50 miles of dirt were covered in a day filled with adaptability, teamwork, and exceptional scenery.

Jeff Boggs

RIGS and COFFEE – Plata Coffee – December 13, 2025



December's RIGS and COFFEE brought a great turnout on a beautiful morning for caffeine, conversation, and tire-kicking. Members gathered at Plata Coffee to admire custom rigs and catch up off the trail.

This monthly event—held the second Saturday of each month—continues to be a hit, with thanks extended to Aaron and the Plata Coffee baristas for their ongoing support of the NM4W community.

Mary Turpin

Gordy's – Moderate Play Day – December 20, 2025



Ten rigs met in Lemitar and headed to Gordy's Hill OHV Area for a day of desert rock crawling and hands-on fun. The group spent the morning on Lower Amado, where several members tested recent vehicle modifications in a low-stress but engaging environment.

A developing "baby boulder garden" provided the perfect excuse to deploy winches, traction boards, and hi-lift jacks. Vehicle dynamics were on full display—shorter wheelbase rigs struggled in spots where Gladiators cruised, while tight turns flipped the advantage. Lunch at

Pucker Falls preceded an afternoon run through Upper Amado, with the group wrapping up almost exactly on schedule.

Veteran and newer crawlers alike enjoyed a productive, playful day on the rocks.

Mary Turpin

Wanderlust Run – December 22, 2025

Seven rigs explored the western Jemez Mountains on a relaxed winter wander. Starting in Cuba, the group aired down in a meadow before immediately encountering snow and mud. The day unfolded with spontaneous route choices, downed trees to note for future trail work, and a winding mine road through forests and open meadows.

With no rigid agenda, the Wanderlust Run delivered exactly what its name promises—a calm, exploratory day enjoying the journey as much as the destination.



Snow Petersen**Winter Adventure in the Zuni Mountains – December 26, 2025**

This easy-to-moderate holiday ride brought six rigs, ten people, and seven dogs into the southeastern Zuni Mountains. Morning fog gave way to clear views once the group reached



the plateau, revealing expansive vistas and abundant wildlife—including a memorable encounter with a herd of elk.

Members explored a mix of graded roads and lesser-traveled routes, discovering old mines, unique rock formations, burn scars, peaks, and numerous canyons throughout the region. The ride offered a perfect post-holiday reset filled with exploration, history, and winter beauty.

Matt Martel**Caja del Rio Plateau – December 27, 2025**

What was expected to be a dry and dusty ride turned into an “eat no dust” day thanks to unexpected drizzle. Seven vehicles set out, including a first-time applicant and a returning prospective member, to complete a 34-mile loop in about five hours.

Mud added intrigue without causing issues, and the group enjoyed hill climbs, boundary crossings between BLM, Santa Fe National Forest, and New Mexico lands, and lunch at Hang Glider Hill—minus the hang gliders. Highlights included spotting a petroglyph in the Santa Fe River canyon and sharing the trail

with great company on a uniquely moody day.

Mary Turpin

Badge of Honor Trail – Amatista Ledges – December 28, 2025

Members tackled the Amatista Ledges Badge of Honor trail, adding another technical and rewarding challenge to the month's lineup. The run tested skills and vehicles alike, offering a strong finish for those seeking a more focused off-road accomplishment before year's end.



From holiday traditions to technical challenges and peaceful exploration, December 2025 captured everything that makes NM4W special. Here's to carrying that momentum—and that sense of adventure—straight into 2026.



"No doubt about it, captain ... it's definitely an Italian sub."

Looking Back at 2025: A Year on the Trail

By Frank Whiston

As the calendar closes on 2025, it's clear that New Mexico 4-Wheelers once again delivered on what the club does best: getting people out on the trail, building community, and continuing to be a respected voice for responsible motorized recreation across the state and beyond.

From winter runs at Gordy's Hill to summer camping trips, multi-day overland adventures, and packed monthly meetings, this year reflected both the depth of experience within the club and the willingness of members to step up and lead.

NM4W 2025
A Year Worth Celebrating

- 120+** adventures, meetings, and events
- ~75** trail rides and multi-day journeys
- overnight campouts and extended overland trips
- 12** monthly meetings bringing members together
- 30-45** friends at an average meeting
- 46** celebrating together at the Annual Picnic
- 40+** rigs rolling on our biggest ride of the year
- 15+** members stepping up to lead
- 3+** stewardship work efforts improving
- states explored – NM, UT, CO**

One incredible year of trails, service, and community.
Here's to even bigger adventures and new memories in 2026!

A Full Calendar, All Year Long

NM4W hosted **dozens of trail rides** throughout 2025, spanning nearly every region of New Mexico. Members explored familiar favorites like Cedro Peak, Mt. Taylor, the Jemez Mountains, and the San Mateo range, while also venturing farther afield to places like the San Juans, Moab, Green River, the Rimrocker Trail, and beyond.

The ride schedule offered something for everyone:

- Easy scenic explorations and forest road cruises
- Moderate trail runs and exploratory routes
- Technical rock crawling at Gordy's Hill
- Overnight camping and multi-day overland trips

Seasonal traditions remained strong, including the **New Year's Day run**, **Go Topless Day**, **summer camp trips**, and the always-popular **Christmas Tree Run** to close out the year.

Strong Participation and New Leaders

Participation remained high across rides, meetings, and events, with many outings filling quickly and some drawing 20–40 rigs. Monthly club meetings consistently saw solid attendance, reflecting an engaged membership invested in the club's direction.

A standout theme in 2025 was the continued growth of new and returning trail leaders. First-time leaders successfully hosted rides,

exploratory runs were added to the calendar, and weekday and half-day options helped

accommodate different schedules. This willingness to lead—and to mentor new leaders—continues to be one of NM4W’s greatest strengths.

Stewardship and Advocacy in Action

Beyond recreation, NM4W remained deeply committed to stewardship and access. Multiple work efforts at **Johnson (Gordy’s) Hill OHV Area**, including several rounds of signage installation and coordination with land managers, demonstrated the club’s long-term investment in sustainable trail systems.

Members also supported broader advocacy and education efforts through:

- **National Public Lands Day**
- **Tread Lightly! training**
- Participation in NMOHVA and regional 4WD events
- Engagement with land managers and partner organizations

These efforts reinforce NM4W’s reputation as a constructive, solutions-oriented partner when it comes to motorized access.

Community Beyond the Trail

The social side of the club was just as active. Regular **Rigs and Coffee** meetups, potlucks, the annual picnic, holiday gatherings, and special events like Toys for Tots and memorial celebrations reminded us that NM4W is as much about people as it is about places. Multi-day trips and camping weekends gave members a chance to slow down, share stories around the fire, and build the friendships that keep people coming back year after year.

Closing the Year Strong

December wrapped up the year in classic NM4W fashion—and the trails stayed busy right to the end. From mountain rides and a festive mistletoe hunt to a well-attended Christmas Tree Run and a lively holiday party and meeting, the month reflected the energy and camaraderie that defined the year. Members also closed out December on the trail at Gordy’s Hill, Wanderlust, Amatista Ledges, and the Caja del Rio Plateau, proving that the NM4W calendar stayed full through the final days of the year.

As we looked ahead to 2026, the foundation was strong. With experienced leaders, new volunteers stepping forward, and a membership that valued both adventure and stewardship, New Mexico 4-Wheelers was well positioned for another outstanding year. Thank you to everyone who led rides, worked events, attended meetings, turned wrenches, installed signs, cooked meals, and showed up—on the trail and off it. The momentum built in 2025 carried straight into the new year.

Member Spotlight: Nathan Marquez

By Frank Whiston

If you've joined an NM4W run this year, chances are you've already crossed paths with Nathan Marquez and Sephanie Headrick. Raised in Bosque Farms and now calling Albuquerque's Knob Hill neighborhood home, Nathan joined the New Mexico 4-Wheelers in May 2025 and quickly discovered what makes this club special — not just the trails, but the people.

Nathan's path into four-wheeling started through friends and NM4W members JP and Susan Bowdoin, who invited him along on a run. After early trips to the Sandia Man Cave and the Puerco, Nathan was ready for what he describes as his *first big run* with the club — a moment that would leave a lasting impression during Don's Famous Mt. Taylor the Harder Way ride back in May.

"We were climbing the first steep hill when Don got on the radio to say he needed help and almost tipped over. Like, um... okay???" Nathan recalls. Instead of panic, the situation turned into a real-time lesson in teamwork. Nathan and his wife watched as members immediately came together, spotted, stabilized, and helped Don safely through the obstacle. "We got to observe everyone come together and help Don out, which was awesome." With that moment behind them, the rest of the run went smoothly. "Onward and upward we went without issue."

That experience perfectly captured what NM4W is about for Nathan — shared problem-solving, calm communication, and confidence built on trust. It also cemented his appreciation for the club's emphasis on safety and support, especially for newer members.

Nathan currently wheels a 2020 Jeep Wrangler Unlimited, equipped with a 2.5-inch lift on 35s, rock sliders, and a Freedom Top, a setup that's proven capable across a variety of trails. One of his favorite club outings so far has been the North Baldy run, which combined challenging terrain with unforgettable scenery. The hike to the summit and seeing the marker for a B17 crash during

WWII added another dimension to the trip. Jonathan's route between Carson and the Jemez, finishing at the Gilman Tunnels, was also a standout experience for Nathan.





Jeep Jamboree that Nathan Attended in Williamsburg Kentucky this past October

Looking ahead, Nathan hopes to expand his off-road adventures through Jeep Jamboree trips in places like Washington State and Wyoming. Off the trail, he enjoys golf, hands-on projects, and cheering on Lobo basketball.

For anyone thinking about joining or signing up for their first run, Nathan keeps the advice simple:

“Don’t hesitate to sign up for runs and get out there!”

From that first steep hill to many more miles ahead, we’re glad Nathan and his family are part of the NM4W community.



Vice President’s Soap Box

By Jonathan Rivera

New Applicants in December 2025: We have had 12 applicants in the month of December alone. Thanks to all of you who are spreading the word about how amazing our club is and inviting new people to join our sport. All applicants have been contacted via email with my welcoming e-mail.

We currently have 1 applicant with 6 points, Pedro Estevan-Hernandez, (7 if he were at the December Christmas Party/meeting), and Georgia Kimbell (5 if she were at the December Christmas Party/meeting). Neither of them was present at the meeting.

Transgression fines:

- Jonathan Rivera on the Christmas Tree run for doughnuts in the snow and for walking into a tree branch for a 10-100 break.
- Willy Crawley got the UNO reverse card played on him. Willy tried to claim Snow’s ride was not exploratory because she wandered into some areas that were not originally on her calendar event. Don Roy corrected him by reviewing the calendar

description and clarified the instance(s) where Snow identified the ride as exploratory.

Glorieta Mesa exploration . . November 29, 2025

We took an after Thanksgiving quik ride to Glorieta to explore the areas that had been on my list of areas to expand the clubs area of wheeling... 10 rigs and 14 people started on **Rowe Peak Pass** and headed into the Glorieta Mesa where we looped north and south on the western sode of Rowe Peak (~elevation of 8048 ft.). We headed south on **No Agua Tank** and intersected with **North Glorieta Pass** for almost 11 miles, where we will caught Forest RD 326PN and headed east to **Gloriet Mesa**. We then went east on this trail heading north and looping back to the south and then heading west. The finishing part of the ride was the ABSOLUTE best part and was Forest RD 326P - which is narrow and will drop us down some technical obstacles and exits back on **North Glorieta Pass**. Look at the gallery to see the rocks we trekked over and the celebration area I discovered.

I was asked on the ride what I rated the ride - overall I felt it was a 3 to 4 out of 10. Most of the challenging parts were certainly on Forest RD 326P. If you could get out there, this would be the section I would focus on. You can take Santa Fe Country Road 51 to North Glorieta Pass and find 35.51053, -105.80579. This is where the fun will begin.

Badge of Honor Trail - Amatista Ledges . . December 27, 2025

5 Jeep Wrangler Rubicons went to go play on the new [Jeep Badge of Honor](#) (BoH) trail in New Mexico - Amatista Ledges located near Las Cruces, NM. This BoH was added in April 2025 when the Jeep® Badge of Honor® expanded the database. This was an excellent trip to contribute to the narrative I have of expanding our range of coverage by the club to other areas of the State of NM. We met at the Robledo Mountains OHV Staging Area at 8:00am, aired down, quik driver's meeting and hit the trail by 8:30am. We began our ride by heading east on to Robledo Chili Canyons Loop where we encountered some rocky ledges as we climbed a hill – this was an introduction of what was to come. Amatista Ledges begins ~1.7 miles from the staging area as another trail named Big Jim – I found this out as we entered the trail. The trail is rated a 8 and there are some areas that certainly showed us why. We went over boulders that were as big as 36”, down some water run off that were >3’ tall, through some spots that had tight turns that our JLU drivers were able to use skill and spotters to maneuver through. Spanning the “Grease Pit” was certainly the highlight of the trail. Having a wider wheel offset did help us all, as well as great spotting by Leroy, Mary, and Josh. This is an areas I will certainly be taking the club back to in early 2026 for a weekend of trails in the Robledo Mountains – be on the lookout.





Meeting Minutes

M 1, 2025

By Shirley Godfrey

President Jack Dickey called the meeting to order at 4:54 pm.

The meeting was held at Diego and Lysle Serna's house.

Jack thanked the Serna's for hosting the meeting and preparing the meats.

Jack presented Willie Crawley with the First Time Trail Leader medallion. Willie has been leading trails for a while. This was the first chance of receiving the medallion. Doug Story was unable to be at the meeting and will receive his medallion at his next meeting.

The gift exchange will happen after the business meeting.

MEMBERS ATTENDING: Amy Allen, Steve Allen, Jeff Boggs, Paula Boggs, Glenn Boudreaux, JP Bowdoin, Susan Bowdoin, William Crawley, Janet Crosby, Mike Crosby, Stephen Daniels, Cathy Dickey, Jack Dickey, Linda Dobson, Patrick Dobson, Doug Elkins, Shirley Godfrey, Michael Hoffman, Ed Kausche, Lyn Kausche, Leroy Lints, Matt Martel, Allison Martinez, Jennifer Myers, Myron Myers, Jack Nutter, Snow Petersen, Matthew Ray, Lauri Rector, Jonathan Rivera, Christine Robson, Steve Robson, NaDeen Roland, Don Roy, Chris Sears, Diego Serna, Lysle Serna, Beth P. Steele, Richard Steele, Josh Tucker, Mary Turpin, Ian Watson, Tonia Watson, Anthony Weaver, Trish Weller, Beth Whiston, Frank Whiston, William Zobel

GUESTS ATTENDING: No guests in attendance.

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT – VP Jonathan Rivera

There were nineteen new applicates since the last meeting.

Johanthan went over this past month's transgression fines.

Adding to the coffers this month –

Jonathan Rivera – 1. was ratted out by Jack Dickey for doing donuts on the Christmas tree run.

2. Jonathan walked into a branch while looking for a 10 100 spot.

Mary Turpin – while at Moab, Mary had to be winched up and continued to drive with the emergency brake on causing a lot of smoke.

SECRETARY'S REPORT - Shirley Godfrey

Meeting minutes can be read in the Newsletter. - A motion was made and approved by a majority of members present without discussion.

TREASURER'S REPORT - Rich Steele

Current balances for checking, saving accounts and Pay Pal were provided. The reports for the IRS and Secretary of State have been completed.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the treasurer's report. Motion was approved by a majority of members present without discussion.

TRIP CHAIRMAN'S REPORT –Mary Turpin

Mary went over past and rides. Trip leaders/ride attendee gave a brief rundown of the ride.

Past Events and Trips Trip Chair Report – Mary Turpin

Past Events and Trips (12 since last meeting!)

- November 14, Last Minute Zuni Ride, Snow Peterson
- November 20, Weekday Cedro Peak Run, Jonathan Rivera – rainy and muddy, made for a fun run
- November 21, Gordy's Signage Round 3, Frank Whiston
- November 22, Zuni Mountain Ride, Snow Peterson
- November 26-30, Thanksgiving in Moab, Mary Turpin - Mary's favorite word for a great time - EPIC
- November 29, Glorietta Mesa Exploration, Jonathan Rivera – Diego brought along the RC
- November 30, Toys for Tots Show and Shine
- December 6, Christmas Tree Run, Jack Dickey – very little snow, no dust, and helped a family whose little girl cut herself on a saw
- December 6, Datil and Sawtooth Mountains – Willie Crawley - great day. Went to Davenport, saw many stone houses.
- December 7, Mistletoe Hunt, San Mateo Mountains – Doug Story
- December 12, Mt. Taylor & South San Mateo Mesa – Snow Peterson - too much snow at Mt. Taylor. Beautiful fun ride.
- December 13, Rigs and Coffee, Plata Coffee - good turn out.

Upcoming Events and Trips

Five trips are on the calendar before our next meeting, refer to website for details. Contact trip leader if there are questions.

Transgression Fine Raffle – At the Christmas party, the money collected throughout the year for transgressions is raffled off. This year's winner was Chris Sears winning \$65.00

A motion was made to adjourn and seconded. Motion was approved by a majority of members present without discussion. Meeting adjourned at 5:45 pm.

Keep PUBLIC lands open to the PUBLIC

NM4W Officers and Staff

President Jack Dickey pres@nm4w.org	Vice-President Membership Chair Jonathan Rivera vpres@nm4w.org	Secretary Shirley Godfrey sec@nm4w.org
Treasurer Rich Steele treas@nm4w.org	Program Chair Cathy Dickey prog@nm4w.org	Historian Frank Whiston hist@nm4w.org
Trip Chair Mary Turpin trips@nm4w.org	Environmental Affairs William Zobel envdir@nm4w.org	Membership Info Shirley Godfrey info@nm4w.org
Outside Org Mgr Frank Whiston outorg@nm4w.org	Web Admin Don Roy webadmin@nm4w.org	Newsletter Editor Don Roy editor@nm4w.org

